

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of claims:

1. (currently amended) A method of characterizing social relationships among members of a social network, the method comprising the steps of:
 - receiving a plurality of messages communicated during a dialogue between two members of a social network;
 - determining a purpose for each of the messages corresponding to one or more speech acts within the dialogue between the two members which characterize the content of the messages;
 - determining a status of the dialogue and updating the dialogue status as the dialogue progresses including determining an outcome of the dialogue;
 - determining at least one pattern in the messages communicated during the dialogue corresponding to one or more types of interaction between the two members of the social network; and
 - objectively characterizing quality of the social relationships among between the two members of the social network based on analysis of the pattern and purposes of the messages, and the dialogue status, and the dialogue outcome, for optimizing the social relationship and performance of the two members of the social network.
2. (original) The method of claim 1 further comprising the steps of:

selecting one of a plurality of purpose categories; and
embedding indicia of the selected purpose category in at least one of the
plurality of messages.

3. (original) The method of claim 2 further comprising the step of determining the purpose of at least one of the plurality of messages by extracting the indicia therefrom.

4. (original) The method of claim 1 further comprising the step of determining the purpose of each of the messages by extracting indicia of such purpose from a body section of each message.

5. (original) The method of claim 1 further comprising the step of determining the purpose of each of the messages by extracting indicia of such purpose from a header section of each message.

6. (original) The method of claim 1 wherein at least one of the messages is an electronic mail message.

7. (currently amended) The method of claim 1 wherein the purpose determined for each of the messages is selected from speech acts including at least one of: a note, an acknowledgement, a counter, a reverse counter, a complete, a commit, an acceptance, a decline, an offer, an invitation, a withdrawal, an opt-out, a request, and a question.

8. (currently amended) The method of claim 1 wherein the pattern in the messages corresponds to types of interactions between the members of the social network selected from at least one of: a frequency of interaction, a latency in response, a latency in completion, a successful completion ratio, a nonresponsive ratio, an unsuccessful ratio, and a number of participating members until completion.

9. (original) The method of claim 1 further comprising the step of analyzing the purpose for each of the messages to determine the pattern in the messages.

10. (previously presented) The method of claim 1 further comprising the step of classifying an outcome for each of the messages as one of a favorable, unfavorable, and neutral type.

11. (previously presented) The method of claim 10 further comprising the step of assigning a score to each of the members of the social network participating in the dialogue, the score assigned to each participating member being based at least in part on an outcome determined for each of the messages transmitted by that participating member.

12. (previously presented) The method of claim 11 further comprising the steps of:

incrementing the score assigned to a particular one of the participating members in response to favorable outcomes associated with messages transmitted by that particular participating member; and

decrementing the score assigned to the particular participating member in response to unfavorable outcomes associated with messages transmitted by that particular participating member.

13. (previously presented) The method of claim 10 further comprising the steps of:
repeating each of the steps for a plurality of dialogues between the members of the social network; and

assigning a score to each of the members of the social network based on the outcomes of the messages transmitted by each such member during the plurality of dialogues.

14. (original) The method of claim 13 further comprising the step of using the scores and characterized relationships of the members to select members of a new social network.

15. (currently amended) A system for characterizing social relationships among members of a social network, the system comprising:

a message transmission-reception process receiving a plurality of messages communicated during a dialogue between two members of a social network;

a primitive-dialogue selection process to determine a dialogue status and update the dialogue status as the dialogue progresses including determining an outcome of the dialogue;

a primitive-detection process determining a purpose for each of the messages, said purpose corresponding to one or more speech acts within the dialogue between the two members which characterize the content of the messages;

a pattern-detection process determining at least one pattern in the messages communicated during the dialogue, said at least one pattern corresponding to one or more types of interaction between the two members of the social network; and

a group-performance process objectively characterizing quality of the social relationships among between the two members of the social network based on analysis of the pattern and purposes of the messages, and the dialogue status, and dialogue outcome, for optimizing the social relationships and performance of the two members of the social network.

16. (previously presented) The system of claim 15 in which the primitive/dialogue-selection process selects one of a plurality of purpose categories and embedding indicia of the selected purpose category in at least one of the plurality of messages.

17. (original) The system of claim 15 wherein the primitive-detection process determines the purpose of each of the messages by extracting indicia of such purpose from a body section of each message.

18. (original) The system of claim 15 wherein the primitive-detection process determines the purpose of each of the messages by extracting indicia of such purpose from a header section of each message.

19. (original) The system of claim 15 wherein at least one of the messages is an electronic mail message.

20. (currently amended) The system of claim 15 wherein the purpose for each of the messages determined by the primitive-detection process corresponds to speech acts including at least one of: a note, an acknowledgement, a counter, a reverse counter, a complete, a commit, an acceptance, a decline, an offer, an invitation, a withdrawal, an opt-out, a request, and a question.

21. (currently amended) The system of claim 15 wherein the pattern in the messages determined by the pattern-detection process corresponds to types of interaction including at least one of: a frequency of interaction, a latency in response, a latency in completion, a successful completion ratio, a nonresponsive ratio, an unsuccessful ratio, and a number of participating members until completion.

22. (original) The system of claim 15 wherein the pattern-detection process analyzes the purpose of each of the messages to determine the pattern in the messages.

23. (previously presented) The system of claim 15 wherein the pattern-detection process classifies outcomes of each of the messages as one of a favorable, unfavorable, and neutral type.

24. (previously presented) The system of claim 15 wherein the pattern-detection process assigns a score to each of the members of the social network participating in the dialogue, the score based at least in part on an outcome of each of the messages transmitted by that participating member.

25. (previously presented) The system of claim 24 wherein the group-performance process:

increments the score assigned to a particular one of the participating members in response to favorable-type outcomes associated with messages transmitted by that particular participating member; and

decrements the score assigned to the particular participating member in response to unfavorable outcomes associated with messages transmitted by that particular participating member.

26. (previously presented) The system of claim 15 wherein the group-performance process assigns a score to each of the members of the social network based on the outcomes of the messages transmitted by each such member during a plurality of dialogues.

27. (original) The system of claim 26 wherein the scores and characterized relationships of the members are used to select members of a new social network.

28.-29. (cancelled)

30. (new) A method of characterizing social relationships among a plurality of members of a social network, the method comprising the steps of:

receiving a plurality of messages communicated during dialogues between members of a social network;

determining a purpose for each of the messages corresponding to one or more speech acts within a dialogue between a pair of members of the social network which characterize the content of the messages between the pair of members;

determining a status of the dialogue between the pair of members and updating the dialogue status as the dialogue progresses including determining an outcome of the dialogue;

determining at least one pattern in the messages communicated during the dialogue corresponding to one or more types of interaction between the pair of members of the social network; and

objectively characterizing quality of the social relationships among the plurality of members of the social network based on analysis of the patterns and purposes of messages between a number of pairs of members, and the status and outcome of dialogues between the

number of pairs of members, for optimizing the social relationships and performance of the plurality of members of the social network.